

Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

130 East Twenty-second Street, New York City

Bulletin

OCT 28 1937

VOL. X, No. 5

MAY, 1931

"In the annual rings of each tree God has sealed the permanent record of its lifelong experience. The keen-eyed woodsmen can distinguish there the years of shelter and ample nourishment from the lean years of dryness, fire or plague. The life of a tree and the life of a child are somewhat akin. Today we are building into the bodies and souls of our children annual rings of care or privation which later generations will look upon and ponder."

— "Child Health and Happiness,"
by REV. BRYAN J. MCENTEGART.

INSTITUTION NEWS

INSTITUTION WORKERS' INSTITUTES IN CAROLINAS PROVE POPULAR

Training for workers in children's institutions seems to be finding its way out of a dark wood. In April a much needed precedent was established when several cooperating organizations conducted four institutes for institution workers in North Carolina and South Carolina.

This training program was sponsored by the Tri-State Conference of Orphanage Workers and the teaching staff was supplied by the Child Welfare League of America, the American Child Health Association and the National Recreation Association.

About 175 cottage mothers and matrons constituted a large majority of the attendance, which included more than 30 executives and sub-executives. The total enrollment of 236 also included case workers, nurses, dietitians, recreation workers and teachers. The participation of so many women whose duties include the care and training of children was made possible by locating the institutes at centers which could be reached by a large number without entire interruption of their daily work. For the most part they could reach the nearest institute in less than an hour by auto, although a few of them traveled for more than two hours each way for ten days in order to attend.

Heretofore most projects for training such workers have been so far removed from the institutions interested as to prevent attendance by both rank and file of the staff. At these institutes it was common for an executive to come with two or three autos or a school bus loaded with cottage mothers and other workers. A skeleton staff was left at the institution so that with the help of older children the mid-day meal might be served and the most necessary duties given some attention. Before leaving for the morning session of the institute most of the matrons and cottage mothers saw their children off to school. To make this possible and to allow them to return in time to be on duty at the evening meal, the institute sessions were scheduled from

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA MEETINGS AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE, JUNE 14-20

The Leamington Hotel will be headquarters of the League at Minneapolis. The tentative program is as follows:

June 15, 3 p. m. Discussion groups: (Attendance limited to League members.)

Executives of Child Placing Agencies

Leader: Edwin D. Solenberger, Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania

Executives of Child-Caring Institutions

Leader: Miss Myrtle L. Evans, Methodist Orphans' Home Association, St. Louis

Case Supervisors of Child-Placing Agencies

Leader: Miss Ruth Johnson, Children's Aid Society, Detroit

Workers in State Departments

Leader: Miss Margaret Reeves, Bureau of Child Welfare, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Case Workers in Child-Caring Agencies

Leader: Mrs. Bertha H. Butler, Chicago Orphan Asylum

June 16, 3 p. m. Discussion groups:

Standards in Child-Placing Agencies

Leader: C. W. Areson, The Cleveland Humane Society

Standards in Child-Caring Institutions

Leader: Miss Mary Irene Atkinson, Division of Charities, Department of Public Welfare, Columbus, Ohio

(Continued on page 5, column 1)

(Continued on page 5, column 2)

HOUSEKEEPER SERVICE DISCUSSED

(Editor's Note: At the Midwest Regional Conference, Mrs. Dorothy Alter, of the Jewish Home Finding Society of Chicago, and Miss Jane Mullenbach, of the Chicago Home for the Friendless, discussed the plan of sending competent women into families during a temporary emergency to care for the children and do the housekeeping instead of resorting to foster home or institutional placement. The following summary indicates what the experience of these two agencies has been.)

The Jewish Home Finding Society started housekeeping service in 1924. At first it was largely confined to families in which the illness of the mother or a temporary emergency necessitated such assistance. In 1927 the service was enlarged to provide housekeepers for widowers. The organization has never failed to get a housekeeper for a temporary situation, no matter how difficult the father in the home might be or how poor the home was physically. Sometimes it has been necessary to give the housekeeper sheets and blankets and to help out with other household supplies in order to make her work easier.

The Society averages 25 children in care at any one time whose mothers are out of the home. In addition we supply the family agency with housekeepers, called "Mothers' Helpers," for families in which the mother, who is a cardiac or neurotic, or a convalescent, is not able to do all of her own work but still does not leave her home. Often the helper is able to teach the mother to feed her family better and to manage her work better during the time she is in the home.

In 1923 the Jewish Home Finding Society placed over 300 children in foster homes. In 1930 only 97 were placed. A large part of this reduction in intake is due to the use of housekeeping service.

The plan was started to keep the child at home with his family. He can continue at the same school. He has his father, his sisters and brothers near him. He is spared the strain of adjusting to a new environment.

The status of the father in the community is the same. He has retained his moral and financial reputation, which he sometimes loses when the community knows his children are away from him.

Our organization recently surveyed some families where housekeepers were placed. We found that: (1) The worker knows the father much better than under the foster home placement plan; (2) the father is the master of the situation. Nothing is planned without him and the Society's contact is often helpful to him personally. Even in remarriage we have noticed that some fathers had developed an interest in their children to such an extent that they were selecting new mates who would be most suitable for their children. One

father said, "Were it not for the children I would make a different match." (3) Dependency in the children is not so pronounced. Children do not think of the housekeeper in terms of substitution, but as a servant. (4) The cost is less. Right now we can get women for \$10 a week and sometimes less. The family contributes what it can and the agency makes up the balance, which is less than would be spent on foster care, as a usual thing.

We prefer women from 40 to 60, depending upon careful study of the woman, her personality, her references, sometimes, not always, a doctor's reference. Many of our housekeepers are widows who are happy to be independent of their children.

Any situation can be tided over, even when a father is a drunkard. In that case we prefer that the housekeeper sleep in the home to supervise the children at night. We have found that we are able to improve standards of living. In one family of five children where the father was a widower, we prevailed upon the father to move into a better neighborhood as a matter of safeguarding the children and the agency paid the difference in rent. The housekeeper in this home was a valuable ally to the case worker in her efforts to improve conditions.

It has been possible to get a housekeeper into a home where there was a psychotic father. He had ideas of persecution which he told to the children. After several housekeepers were tried we finally found one who worked out well. She had a calming influence and kept the children busy when the father was at home. A radio was put into the home to divert the attention of the children from the father's ravings. He has improved greatly and the children have also improved. Because the father always refused to allow the children to leave the home the plan was tried as a last resort and without much hope, but it succeeded in spite of our misgivings.

The Jewish Home Finding Society has discovered that there is little effect upon children by a change of housekeepers, because the child feels he and his father are masters of the situation. Our supervision is better because it is necessary to maintain a close contact with the situation. We know more about the children and the family attitudes because of the objective observation of the housekeeper. We can more quickly raise standards in the home with the aid of the housekeeper.

The Chicago Home for the Friendless started housekeeper service last July. Our policy is to receive children from other agencies for temporary placement. Clinics, hospitals and family agencies are our chief sources of intake. We have developed our housekeeper service program slowly, as we have had only a small

budget for this purpose, but our experience leads us to believe that such service is a valuable adjunct to a child-caring program.

A non-sectarian agency like ours has a much more heterogeneous case load than is true of the Jewish Home Finding Society. But even so, it is not impossible to find women who are able to meet the varying economic and cultural levels of our families with equanimity.

The colored housekeeper has proven very adaptable. Two Assyrian families were successfully aided by sending in colored housekeepers during the illness of the mother.

A family of Mexican children needed a housekeeper quickly, as the mother had to go to the hospital at once. The father spoke no English. The colored housekeeper who was sent in did so well that the mother on her return from the hospital was anxious to learn how the colored woman cooked the food the children had learned to like, and even the Mexican neighbors asked for her recipes.

The machinery required for this plan is so simple that it is not difficult to get boards of directors to see the efficacy of the system. The case work process is, of course, the "backbone" of the housekeeper service program, as the worker must sort out the individual best equipped to carry on with a particular kind of family situation from the women available for such service.

References on Housekeeper Service

"Homekeepers," Sadie F. Adelson, June, 1929 issue BULLETIN.

"More About Housekeeping Service," September, 1929 issue BULLETIN.

"Housekeeper Service," Lotte Marcuse, a pamphlet, 1930, Child Welfare League of America (price 15 cents).

THE NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The New England Regional Conference of the Child Welfare League of America was held at the Biltmore Hotel, Providence, Rhode Island, on April 15th and 16th. This was the first time that the conference had been held outside of Boston, and the Rhode Island agencies were proud to have drawn it into their territory. The fact that there was a total registration of almost four hundred social workers and friends of social work would seem to vouch for a genuine interest in this new departure. Aside from social service administrators of the district, such as Dr. Frederic J. Farnell, Chairman of the Rhode Island Public Welfare Commission, Dr. Arthur H. Ruggles, Superintendent of Butler Hospital, Prof. Harold S. Bucklin, of the Social Science Department of Brown University, and Dr. Leroy A. Halbert, Director of Rhode Island

State Institutions, the conference was further welcomed by Senator Jesse H. Metcalf and Governor Normal S. Case. Sightseeing tours were arranged for the out-of-town delegates, to give them a broader acquaintanceship with the city.

Coming so soon after the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection called by President Hoover, and including speakers active on the conference committees, such as Miss Martha Van Rensselaer, Dr. C. C. Carstens and Mr. William Hodson, it was natural that a good deal of emphasis should have been placed on the findings and challenge of the conference.

Miss Van Rensselaer termed the White House Conference an "Adventure in Adult Education" for the benefit of the children of the country. Adults must continue to learn, she urged, if they are to be able to teach children to live successfully in the family and in the community, and they must be ready to adjust education at home and at school if they are to keep step with progress. The great fund of information as to the present conditions of our children contained in the findings of this conference can have far reaching results if it is utilized and intelligently interpreted into active programs by educators, social workers, clergy, organizations, the press, and parents themselves.

Mr. Hodson, discussing the inter-relation of economics and the problems of child welfare as presented at the White House Conference, emphatically stated his disagreement with that part of the findings which divorced child welfare from economic and industrial well being. The conditions of the past eighteen months which have brought millions of families to the borderlines of dependency, or over it, must have taught the country how deeply maladjustment in any part of the social fabric affects the health and happiness of the entire population. Misunderstandings will result at the outset of any effort to put the findings into effect unless it is generally accepted that children will continue to suffer after ill health and educational and social maladjustments while a family is attempting to live on a less than reasonable wage, or improper income. Child welfare must be purchased in the marketplace.

Dr. Carstens, speaking on *Practical Goals for the Next Ten Years* as the result of the White House Conference, presented the need of establishing preventative programs in every unit of public social service administration as one of the important objectives. With the needs of the normal child brought for the first time into the picture of child welfare by the conference, the challenge to States has been sounded to adapt programs of child care to fit their needs educationally and socially by improved educational and recreational facilities. For dependent, delinquent, handicapped and defective children, the States must provide workable, adequate

THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF
AMERICA, INC.

President—CHENEY C. JONES, Boston
1st Vice-President—JACOB KEPECS, Chicago
2d Vice-President—MRS. LESSING J. ROSENWALD, Philadelphia
3d Vice-President—MISS RUTH TAYLOR, New York
Secretary—MISS JESSIE P. CONDIT, Newark
Treasurer—PAUL T. BEISER, Baltimore
Executive Director—C. C. CARSTENS

This BULLETIN, published monthly (omitted in July and August).
 Annual subscription, \$1.00. Single copies, 10c.

programs for care and training, at the same time advancing to the position of authorities in the field of child welfare, now too often held only by private organizations. More emphasis must be placed on keeping the child in his own home. If this is not possible, the individual needs of the child must determine the substitute of foster home or institutional care.

Mr. Cheney C. Jones, President of the League, spoke on *The Place of the Child Welfare League*, tying in the League's activities to the future program for child betterment throughout the United States.

The emphasis on the child as an individual in relation to his family and his community was another keynote of the conference. Miss Grace Caldwell, Director of the Play School for Habit Training connected with the North Bennett Street Industrial School in Boston, spoke on *The Needs of the Pre-School Child*. These needs are threefold, she stated—physical, mental and emotional—and the importance of the latter two in the very young child is only beginning to be recognized. Almost at birth a child is beginning to try out his personality against his environment, led by the urge for mastery and recognition. If the child is steered through these early stages wisely and easily, and given a feeling of security and happiness he is well on the way toward the establishment of stable behavior patterns.

Dr. Samuel W. Hartwell, Director of the Worcester Child Guidance Clinic, stressed particularly the importance of the emotional life in dealing with problem children. A child's behavior is determined by his personality, which is the sum total of his experiences plus his emotional responses to these experiences, he declared. The discouraged, fearful, lonesome or confused child is the problem child. Unless this child can be reached through his emotional life and be made to feel that another human personality—psychiatrist, social worker, or someone else who enters his confidence—really understands his problems because of similar emotional experiences, his attitudes and behavior can never be changed.

Seeing things through the child's own eyes was again emphasized by Dr. Julia Deming, psychiatrist at the New England Home for Little Wanderers in Boston, in

her discussion of the problems of children separated from their own parents. With these children the normal sense of security given by a home of their own, and the pleasant, expanding emotions of affection and approbation bestowed by parents have been removed and some very close substitute must be given the child to make him happy, and hence adjusted. Sometimes the right foster home where he will be understood and loved will furnish the satisfying substitute; in some cases the proper institutional life with group activities where his sense of gregariousness and competition will find an outlet may be the thing. In either event, former conditioning experiences will determine the choice, and should be followed by a very careful, step-by-step study of the child's needs as they arise.

Dr. Donald D. Durrell, of the Boston University School of Education, took up the study of the individual child in reference to special school disabilities. He reported some very interesting and practical findings based on a study which he is making of the physically well and normally bright child with reading difficulties. A good deal of the child's trouble may go back, he has found, to language difficulties in the home, lack of word meanings—that is, of linking up words with his own experience, lack of ability to analyze words into their parts,—simply guessing at what is expected of him,—and attempting to read under emotional tension. Educational programs must foresee and prevent these difficulties before they arise.

One afternoon's session was given over to round table conferences on very practical problems faced by child welfare workers. A group of board members led by Mrs. Charles R. Peck, of the Board of Directors of the Church Home Society, Boston, discussed the part that the board member may play in the agency's program, bringing out the importance of the board in stimulating the staff workers and interpreting the work to the general public, as well as the need for special fitness in the choice of the members. Miss Mildred Dewey, of the Judge Baker Foundation in Boston, led in a discussion of *The Problem Child in His Own Home*, and the ways of helping him through study, interpretation to the family, and the use of community educational and recreational resources. The problems of *The Child Born Out of Wedlock* were taken up under the leadership of Miss Flora E. Burton, of the Division of Aid and Relief of the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare, and the need of better legislation for the protection of the child as well as for more careful supervision of the mother and the child with a view to adjusting them to society was brought out. *The Problems of a Visitor* group, led by Miss Elizabeth E. Bissell, of the New England Home for Little Wanderers, developed interesting discussion on the relationship of the vis-

parated the nor-
wn, and on and removed the child sometimes food and in some activities tion will r event, mine the ful, step-
e. university
dividual
He re-
findings
physically
fficulties
k, he has
k of word
his own
nto their
f of him, -
on. Edu-
nt these
to round
faced by
nbers led
rectors of
the part
ancy's pro-
board in
the work
or special
s Mildred
oston, led
own Home,
interpretati-
ty educa-
problems of
under the
ivision of
rtment of
lation for
re careful
a view to
The Prob-
E. Bissell,
ers, devel-
of the vis-

itor to the child, to her agency, and to her own personal life. *The Problems of State Departments*, their "red tape," interstate difficulties, and personnel problems were taken up by a group under Miss Anna I. Griffith, of the Rhode Island Children's Bureau.

The conference was a stimulating and challenging one. A great deal of credit was due the conference committee for their success in procuring such fine speakers and for the smoothness and pleasantness of the conference workings.—RUTH LINDALL, Rhode Island Children's Friend Society, Providence.

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE MEETINGS

(Continued from page 1)

Standards in Protective Agencies

Leader: Theodore A. Lothrop, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Boston

6 p. m. *Dinner for Executives of League Members:*
(Attendance limited as indicated.)

Presiding: Cheney C. Jones, President, Child Welfare League of America

June 17, 1 p. m. *Luncheon meeting:*

Keeping Pace with the Modern Community's Child Welfare Needs.

Speaker: Owen R. Lovejoy, New York Children's Aid Society

June 18, 3 p. m. *Discussion groups:*

Problems of Statewide Child-Caring Associations

Leader: C. V. Williams, Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society, Chicago

Problems of the Indian Child

Leader: Robert T. Lansdale, Office of Indian Affairs, U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

Evaluation of Foster Care

Leader: Alfred F. Whitman, Children's Aid Association, Boston

6 p. m. *Dinner meeting:*

Annual meeting, Child Welfare League of America

Presiding: Cheney C. Jones, President
President's address

Report by Executive Director
Election of Directors and Officers

Round trip tickets to Minneapolis during the week of the National Conference of Social Work will be sold by all of the main Passenger Associations at one and one-half fare. Tickets will be available at the reduced rate from June 9-10 and 12-16, inclusive, but must be used for the return trip prior to midnight of June 26.

INSTITUTION NEWS

(Continued)

10.30 A. M. to 12.30 and from 2.00 to 4.00 P. M., from Monday to Friday, inclusive.

Under these plans the time and expense required for attendance were minimized and the institutions could easily afford to provide the necessary transportation, arrange for daytime operation of the institutions with skeleton staffs, and pay the travel and hotel expenses of the institute staff. The services of this staff were supplied without charge by the three participating national organizations.

The necessary expenses, consisting largely of the transportation and hotel expenses of the institute staff, for which the Tri-State Conference of Orphanage Workers assumed responsibility, were covered by an assessment on each participating institution. This assessment was at the rate of twenty-five cents per capita, using the average daily population of children in computing the assessment for each institution. This seemed preferable to basing the charge upon the number attending the institutes. Under the plan adopted each institution was encouraged to enroll as many employees as could be spared.

Each institute included four ten hour courses, as follows: Health Programs, by LeRoy A. Wilkes, M.D., Director, Division of Medical Service, American Child Health Association; Recreation, by Miss Erna D. Bunke, Field Secretary, Play in Institutions, National Recreation Association; Children's Case Work, by Miss Elizabeth Munro Clarke, Department of Children's Case Work, Child Welfare League of America; Institution Administration, by H. W. Hopkirk, Special Assistant for Study of Institutional Needs, also of the League's staff.

The teaching staff was divided so that two institutes might be operated simultaneously, and so that daily each leader might have an uninterrupted two hour session. At the end of the first week the staff exchanged places.

Demonstrations and discussions were used more frequently than the lecture method. The staff was called upon for a great deal of consultation with workers and with the trustees and executives of institutions.

The institute at Clinton, South Carolina, was held at Thornwell Orphanage, where the hospitality of the institution covered all necessary accommodations. The other institutes were held at points chosen entirely because of their central location. At Raleigh, North Carolina, all sessions but one were held in the Grand Lodge room in the Masonic Building, the other session being accommodated at the Methodist Orphanage. In Charlotte and Greensboro all sessions were held in churches.

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT IN A CHILD PROTECTIVE PROGRAM

SUSAN K. GILLEAN, Executive Secretary
Children's Bureau, Louisiana S.P.C.C., New Orleans

Children's protective agencies are on the defensive, and that is a good sign! Building walls (of excuses) is an old fashioned method of defense which cannot long withstand the onslaughts of intelligent public opinion demanding an evaluation of our so-called "protection."

At the time that protective agencies were first organized, "original sin" and "pure cussedness" were sincerely believed to be the explanations of parental neglect, and punishment was the "cure-all." This same theory held sway in the field of family case work and many surprising records of treatment administered are to be found in the files of any old C.O.S. Both types of agencies labor under the same handicap—a past!

But, while many of the family agencies and most of the child-placing agencies have enthusiastically accepted the new explanations of behavior brought to us by the psychiatrist, and have launched forth into a program of constructive case work of a more analytical and less emotional character than of old, the protective agencies still lag behind, throwing up bulwarks of defensive excuses for continuing to use "force" and "punishment."

"For every child a home and that love and security which a home provides."—*The Children's Charter*.

To no agency come more tragic or appealing examples of homes "without security" than to a protective society. Many situations have reached a crisis before they have come to the agency's attention, and all of them are serious. Upon the visitor in the protective agency, therefore, devolves the grave responsibility of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in a family relationship that is probably torn by dissension, strained to the breaking point, and displaying to the world a "family pattern" that strongly resembles the after-effects of an earthquake.

"Affection for the children" is the mainmast upon which the protective worker spreads the tattered sails of the frail family craft, patching and mending the rents with mutual understanding, and using as a rudder that feeling of responsibility which all normal parents have for their children. The most skillful, patient, and understanding case work is necessary to adjust these extremely difficult family situations. Months and sometimes years of effort go into the rebuilding of one normal home. But if we believe that parents and children "crave" family life, that stability and emotional growth have their normal development within the family group, what avenue of activity is open to the

children's worker that can be so rich in results as the direction of our energies toward seeing that every child may have the opportunity of normal living in his own family group, and that no child shall be removed from his home until skillful case work has proved that the family cannot give opportunities for normal living. This is what "protection" should mean.

A certain proportion of the cases coming to a protective agency show feeble-mindedness and mental disease. This is also true of a family agency. If good case work had been done with the adults of these families when they first came to the attention of a social agency, the long history of repeated offenses against society might never have developed. Certainly it is the responsibility of the agency dealing with such conditions to bring about the commitment to institutions of those individuals who cannot care for themselves in a competitive society, and to see that the dull child has the opportunity for special training that will give him some skill in manual work, and fit him to be successful in a job suited to his abilities.

Securing commitment of the feeble-minded or the insane requires much persistence and is one of the most time-consuming responsibilities of the social worker, but it is sometimes the only solution of a family situation that has no element of positive value around which to build. Dealing with those borderline cases that are not committable, however, is without doubt one of the most difficult and discouraging of our responsibilities. Such clients are like little children, and need constant supervision. They are always with us. We dare not close the case, for the first month that passes without a visit from the social worker is sure to bring a new complaint from a neighbor. The knowledge that "my visitor" is going to call, each month, keeps father at the job several days a week, at least, and mother flourishes the scrubbing brush and cooks vegetables for the sole purpose of bragging about it.

The real limitations of a child protective program are the executives who fail to see the opportunities for service through skillful and intensive case work. Those protective agencies that continue to employ, as "agents," people who have had no training in a school of social work and no case work experience under a real case supervisor will also continue to side-step the challenge thrown to us by the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, and by leaders of thought in the field of children's work.

It is the opinion of the writer that a protective agency has the greatest opportunity for service of any organization in the field of social work, since the families coming under our care are in the greatest need of help. But these situations represent social maladjustment and personality difficulties of the most intensive character.

Tragedy
diagnosis
gerous
send
give
tre
wonder
feeders
"agents
reco

A pro
imendou
number
them to
and wh
service
and the
usual tr
to reali
case su
such d
there is
agency

Deve
proved
and th
respon
tive ag
ful cas

Fitt
munity
macy,
young
securin
health,
who h
school
how d
opport
prejud
are oft
on the
poorer
to pro
majori
and a
gienist
person

The
the m

Tragedies, like dangerous maladies, require expert diagnosis and treatment. Bungling is much more dangerous than neglect. Yet many protective agencies still send absolutely untrained and ignorant "agents" to give treatment in the most serious family crises. No wonder the protective agencies are accused of being feeders of public child-caring departments. If the "agents" know nothing about case work, their only recourse is to remove the children.

A protective agency has an opportunity to add tremendously to the happiness and usefulness of a large number of children each year by making it possible for them to live normal lives among those who love them and who could rear them if given guidance. But this service can only be rendered by a skillful case worker, and the case supervisor should not only have had the usual training and extensive case work experience, but to really meet the challenge to protect family life the case supervisor should undoubtedly have had training and experience as a psychiatric social worker. Under such direction, and staffed with good case workers, there is almost *no limit* to the service that a protective agency can render.

Developing public opinion and bringing about improved legislation are the duties of all social agencies, and the protective group have their full share of this responsibility. But the main objective of every protective agency should be the application of the most skillful case work treatment to every family problem.

ILLEGITIMACY AMONG NEGROES

(Continued from page 8)

Fitting the Negro unmarried mother into the community, in addition to the specific problem of illegitimacy, has factors in common with adjusting other young Negro girls. This is conceived of in terms of securing a job, insuring adequate physical and mental health, and providing recreational outlets. Anyone who has tried to find a job for a Negro girl of high school education with average intelligence will realize how difficult this is even in normal times. Vocational opportunities are limited because many employers are prejudiced against hiring Negro workers. Schools are often hesitant about giving certain types of training on the basis that there is no job available. Because it is poorer economically, the Negro group itself is unable to provide jobs for its youths to a great extent. The majority of jobs open to the Negro girl are poorly paid and are in the field of domestic service. Mental hygienists have long warned of the danger to unadjusted personalities of this type of work.

The beginnings of good physical health are made in the maternity home, and thus the girl in her return to

the community has a fair start. But bad living conditions, overstrain, overwork and routine drudgery prevent a girl from following as fully as she might the health program she has learned. This is an incidental factor which would be minimized to the point of extinction if larger social problems were attacked. In maternity homes there is little preparation of the girl for meeting difficult situations made more difficult because she must approach them from a protected environment. Good social work would be aware of the factors in the community that militate against the unmarried mother with baneful effects upon her mental health. This problem among Negro unmarried mothers is intensified by the adjustments they have to make.

Any case work with unmarried mothers is a remedial measure for a situation already arisen through community lacks. This does not mean that good care and adequate provision for this type of social ill is not needed. In a given case load of forty-three, twenty cases were found to come from an area in Cleveland where overcrowding prevails and where there were no organized community resources such as settlements, library clubs, church clubs, and decent commercialized forms of recreation. This is the environment that produced the unmarried mother, and attention to the problems of this environment will be the way of treating a cause of illegitimacy. Was the girl interested in a sexual outlet because she had no other in the community? Overcrowding and irritability of overworked parents, which are not conducive to family life, add to the personality problems of the girl and to a social situation which adversely affects her personality. The social worker has a duty both to the individuals she treats and to the community to secure the kind of equipment she needs to handle her cases, which includes legislation, attention to housing, and economic betterment. To handle adequately the problem of Negro illegitimacy, these factors call for primary concern.

ENCLOSURES

(Sent to members only)

REFLECTIONS OF A DECADE'S PROGRESS, 1921-1931.
Cleveland Children's Bureau, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio.

Of the 779 social work positions filled by the Joint Vocational Service during 1929 and 1930, 99 were in the field of child placing, 20 in protective work, and 30 in children's institutions. Thus a total of 149, or about one-fifth of the positions filled, were in these three fields. Of the 779 positions, 431 were for social case workers; hence about 23 per cent of the social case work positions were in the field of child welfare, and about 5 per cent in protective work.

**INTER-CITY CONFERENCE ON
ILLEGITIMACY
BULLETIN**

*President: Miss MAUD MORLOCK, Cleveland, Ohio
Vice-President: Miss SABINA MARSHALL, Cleveland, Ohio
Secretary: Miss GRACE REDDING, Cleveland, Ohio
Treasurer: LAWRENCE C. COLE, Cleveland, Ohio*

**SOME ASPECTS OF ILLEGITIMACY AMONG
NEGROES**

Mrs. OLIVE DAVIS STREATER, Case Worker
Cleveland Humane Society

Social problems among Negroes vary as within any other group, according to the class. In addition to this general truth there is another problem: This is one born out of the American attitude toward the Negro group and therefore is a personality problem built, as it is, upon ego hurt and enforced feelings of inferiority with their subsequent defense mechanisms and other reactions. Any problem that affects Negroes is one of individual differences, rather than group differences, plus a warping of the personality by poverty and racial prejudice.

Illegitimacy among Negroes exists for the same reasons it has been found to exist in other groups. The large percentage of Negro cases is due to the fact that conditions favoring illegitimacy, whether they be within the individual or outside, are more prevalent among the Negro group. For example, the underprivileged status of the group prevents its being able to do very much about bad social conditions. Personality difficulties are aggravated by the added burden of adjustment to the prevailing attitudes concerning Negroes.

In some cities the problem of illegitimacy is cared for only by private agencies which are thus able to select cases or to do any of the intensive, pioneering work that is considered one of their functions. In addition to this deficiency in community resources there are others that hamper seriously the work of agencies.

Of prime importance in working with the unmarried mother is the maternity home. Many cities have only one for Negro girls, and this is usually under the auspices of a religious group. Without minimizing the value of religious forces, there is great need that social work ideas should be to the fore. In this branch of social work as in others there is a lack of a personnel trained in case work principles. Persons so trained would enable girls to adjust better in the maternity home. Proper treatment plans could be made with the social worker from the agency and put into operation while the girl is in a selected environment. Behaviour problems could properly be dealt with under such a

regime. The girl's stay in the maternity home could be turned from a marking-time activity into a preparation for her future life. A trained person would be of great value in meeting the needs of the individual with an approach through vocational service, recreational activities, and a development of understanding.

Since illegitimacy is a problem society has to face, it is incumbent on the community to provide facilities for meeting this obligation. Girls having venereal disease are not accepted in maternity homes because these institutions have not the setup to cope with such a problem. While the disease is in its infectious stage, patients are usually hospitalized. During this time there is usually no rehabilitation from a social point of view. Whatever happens to unmarried mothers while they are known to a social agency is a factor in their re-establishment. Unmarried mothers with venereal disease need as much from the community as those not diseased. Whether the solution is to be found in more maternity homes, a particular maternity home for this type of problem, or boarding home care, it must be handled with a case work approach rather than a lumping because of lack of resources. Wherever the community has not been active in meeting its obligations to unmarried mothers with venereal disease it is up to social workers to define their objectives and then take steps toward the accomplishment of these.

If sound principles of social work are put into practice in maternity homes there will be an emphasis on individual differences. Indiscriminate grouping will disappear. The girl of low mentality and poor social background should not by force of circumstances be associated with the girl of more promise for whom the experience of illegitimate parenthood is a temporary maladjustment. Many girls of finer sensibilities have been crushed and embittered when treated like the other girls with their heterogeneous backgrounds and different abilities. Mental hygiene shows that this psychological situation produces a reaction hard to overcome. There is a need for development of more facilities for the care of different types of Negro unmarried mothers. A community may feel that the number of Negro unmarried mothers is too small to warrant more institutions. When a girl has a venereal disease she may be left in her own home or with relatives or friends. The girl who cannot adjust in the maternity home is returned to the old environment. Can we be sure that the community problem is best being met when certain unmarried mothers are left to the care of relatives and friends? These relatives and friends are usually from the same social class and surround the girl with the same environment that produced her illegitimacy.

(Continued on page 7, column 1)